

A Dragon Christmas

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Summary: It's Toothless' first Christmas with the humans, and for the most part it's not what he'd call pleasant.

A Dragon Christmas

I thought I'd put this up now to celebrate winter solstice (which was either today or yesterday, depending on who I ask) and the fact that it's going to get lighter earlier. This was actually written about a year ago for a story exchange thing I was doing with someone else. Enjoy!

* * *

><p>Humans are crazy. I swear there is not a sane human in Berk. First, you have the abrupt turnaround from wanting to kill every dragon alive to practically adopting them. Next you have their strange ideas and customs, like living in the most flammable things you can find. And if that isn't enough, you have the whole idea of Yule.<p>

It had been snowing for three months straight. Normally I'd be curled up on some cozy ledge in the Nest, only venturing out to get food for myself or the Green Death. However, the Green Death was dead, the Nest was, for the most part, abandoned, and I was living with Hiccup and the rest of these insane humans. It took a whole lot of convincing to get me to go outside, and even then I was out for the shortest time possible. Dragons are made for extreme heat. In fact, we are fireproof. Cold is another thing altogether. Since we are essentially large flying reptilesâ€”though far superior to those wimpy little lizards you see scuttling aroundâ€”we are, to some degree, cold-blooded, though we do produce some body heat. Whoever said that dragons are always warm because there is a fire constantly burning in our stomach was an idiot. If we are warm it is because we have been lying near some heat source in an effort to keep our blood circulating.

Back to Yule. As I said before, it had been snowing for three months straight and was likely to snow for three months more. Imagine my surprise when I saw several people haul whole pine trees into their houses. The tree thing I could understand for firewood, but that was usually chopped up before being taken inside. Humans may be crazy, but they weren't stupid enough to start cutting up trees inside. Or were they? I wasn't about to go around looking in windows to find out. Last time I did that some crazy woman almost killed me with a frying pan. I didn't find out until the next day.

"Come on, bud, we're getting our Yule tree." Hiccup called. A what tree? Curious, I followed Hiccup outside into the very deep, very cold snow. I hoped this wouldn't take too long. Stoick was already outside, a huge ax slung over his shoulder. Apparently this would involve chopping down a tree. We began trudging through the forest. I was about ready to go back no matter what either Hiccup or Stoick would do when they stopped in front of a relatively small pine tree. It stood about six and a half feet tall and seemed somewhat scraggly in my opinion. Stoick began chopping it down while Hiccup danced around in an effort to keep warm and I slowly began freezing to death. Finally the stupid tree was down and Stoick and Hiccup tied ropes to it. Two of the ropes were tied to my saddle, while Stoick and Hiccup took the other two.

"Let's go home." Hiccup called to me.

I went so fast the other two had to almost run to keep up with me and did not stop until I was through the door and lying beside the fire. The other two laughed as they untied the ropes and got the tree stood up in what looked to me like a big bucket with legs. They were surveying their work and looking satisfied when someone pounded at the door. Stoick answered it, said, "I'll be back. You can start decorating it." and left. I curled up closer to the fire as Hiccup dragged a basket out from under the stairs, opened it, and began pulling out a long, sparkly something-or-other. He found one end and tried, unsuccessfully, to get in on the top of the tree.

"Toothless, could you please come over here and help me?"

I curled up my nose was almost in the fire.

"Toothless!"

with the dragon equivalent of a sigh I stood up and went over. Hiccup made me lay down, stood on my back, and had me stand up again. I had a bad feeling about this, but moved closer to the tree as Hiccup told me to until a branch was tickling my nose. Hiccup then told me to be absolutely still. The branch tickled my nose even more as the tree moved with whatever Hiccup was doing. I held off the sneeze for as long as I could, hoping that he would just hurry and finish already, but to no avail. I sneezed. Hiccup's false foot slipped, and he grabbed onto the tree for balance. The tree toppled right into the fire while Hiccup fell on top of me. When he saw that the tree had caught on fire he yelled, "Put it out!" I laid down on the burning tree, extinguishing it and getting my feet warm for the first time in three months. Stoick chose that moment to come in. Needless to say, he was not happy. In fact, he was very angry, and he is not someone you want to see angry. Hiccup and I pointed to each other, but Stoick was in no mood to play the blame game. I was promptly kicked out,

literally, while Hiccup stayed inside to clean up the mess. Nursing my injured dignity, I went into the forest to try to find a tree that I could light on fire. I could feel my blood congealing as I trudged through the snow, which completely hid me in some places. Finally I found a fallen tree, which was quite dry after I had brushed the snow off. It caught fire easily and I curled up around it, trying to ignore the snow that melted under and around me. My current problem was the fact that I couldn't fly without Hiccup. If I could I might have just flown back to the Nest and stayed there for a while. Since I couldn't do that, nor was it practical to stay out here and burn down half the forest in an attempt to stay warm, I had to think of a way to get back inside. Since the reason I got kicked out was wrecking the Yule tree, if I found another tree I should be let back in. Hopefully.

That decided, I went out in search of a tree that would do. Most of the trees were too tall, and some of them looked half dead. I was about ready to go back to my burning log and try again later when I found it. It had to be the perfect Yule tree. A little larger than the previous one, it was full with no bare spots or dead needles. I took a running leap and jumped onto it.

The problem with perfect Yule trees is that they are usually healthy, strong, and not prone to break, even when a dragon slams into one. The tree bent, then snapped back. I was slammed into the ground. Not to be deterred, I rolled over, got back up, and ran into it a second time. I could hear a slight popping sound as it bent before getting thrown onto my back again. This time I went back a long ways before starting to run. The tree stayed bent under my weight for a few seconds before breaking near the ground. Excellent. I began dragging the tree back to the village. It was a little more difficult than last time, as I had to grab a branch with my mouth and try to pull it that way.

After a long time of dragging that stupid tree through the stupid snow to the stupid village I finally made it to the house. I had no sooner stopped in front of the door and regained my composure than the door opened and Hiccup stepped out, bundled up and looking discouraged. He stopped and stared for a moment before turning."

"I found him, dad."

"Was he skulking out there the entire time?" Stoick came to the door and also stopped and stared. I put on my best I'm-really-really-sorry face. Stoick looked at the tree, then at me, then at the tree again. Finally he stood to the side.

"I guess you can come in."

The words were no sooner said than I was inside and curled up around the fire so close my nose was actually in it. Hiccup laughed as Stoick cut the base of the tree so it was more level. They got it into the bucket with legs without trouble. This time Stoick put the sparkly stuff on the tree while Hiccup began taking out various objects from the basket. By this time I had regained feeling to my extremities and was able to lend my assistance, which mainly consisted of standing very still while Hiccup put the various objectsâ€"some of which looked suspiciously like my scalesâ€"onto the tree. By the time they were done I was hoping that Hiccup would get a growth spurt before this time next year so I wouldn't have to be used

as a glorified stepping stool again. The two humans stepped back and admired their work. I had to admit, the tree looked good with all the various shiny and sparkly things on it.

"Tomorrow we get the big tree." Stoick said.

Oh no, more hauling trees? I'd already hauled two. Maybe I could just stay home this time. Unfortunately I was required to go along, as I found out the next afternoon when Stoick dragged me outside (literally) to where the rest of the crazy village was gathering. I must admit that I felt not a little satisfied when I saw that all the other dragons were also there. We started off. From what I gathered from the various chatter this was an old tradition that ensured that everyone was at peace with one another. My interpretation was that it was a thing where people could feel closer to each other through mutual suffering. I could tell that none of the other dragons were happy about it either, though it is somewhat entertaining to see a Monstrous Nightmare start to turn blue and shiver.

The big tree was indeed big. In fact, it was almost as big as I'd feared, being maybe three times as tall as ours. The adults began chopping it down while the children made snowmen (or, in one case, a snow dragon) or threw snowballs and the dragons huddled in a group and breathed fire in an effort to keep warm. Apparently tradition required that everyone would make bets as to how far they could haul the big tree. Most couldn't pull it past a few feet, and only a few could make it farther than four yards. Wimps. Everyone else had gone when Hiccup had to open his big mouth.

"I bet Toothless and I could pull it all the way."

There were a few laughs, but most either smiled or rolled their eyes. Unfortunately, no one objected. I suffered myself to be tied to the huge pine while Hiccup got on by back.

"OK, Toothless, if you pull the tree all the way to the Great Hall I'll let you lay in the fire pit."

It was a good thing no one was in my way, or else they probably would have been run over by a dragon, shortly followed by a giant tree. I got to the hall in less than half the time it would have taken the humans to do it (or so they said) and actually made it inside before Hiccup could say "stop." I waited long enough for him to take off my flying paraphernalia before practically leaping into the huge fireplace. Carefully arranging myself so that I wouldn't put out the fire, I laid down and made contented noises as my limbs began to thaw out. The rest of the village filed in, laughing and talking about my wonderful feat. For the most part I ignored them. As long as I didn't have to move for at least an hour. I did hear something about roast dragon, but I assumed it was some more bad human humor and buried my feet deeper into the coals underneath me.

With some stupendous effort on their part the humans managed to stand the tree up and decorated it in much the same fashion as my humans had, albeit with more decorations and a whole lot more people. They used ladders to reach the top of the tree, which I found funny to watch. If they had any sense at all they'd send the younger, smaller people up rather than some of the huge, beefy men that stood swaying twelve feet off the ground. Once again I could have sworn that Hiccup hung at least one of my scales on the tree, though where he was

getting all of them I had no idea.

While they were decorating, I finally found out what all the hubbub was about when a small child asked his mother why they were decorating the tree. Apparently it had something to do with celebrating the winter solstice and inviting whichever ridiculous deity who was in charge of the sun to come back after the longest night of the year. I swear, these humans are beyond insane. Like bringing a tree into your home would make sure the sun came up the next day. I think it's just an excuse to party.

The party in question started after everyone had eaten dinner, which was harder to cook as I was lying on the main heat source and had no inclination to move. Stoick stood and held up his hand. The hall quieted.

"As you all know, the ones who pulled the big tree the farthest this year was Hiccup and his dragon, Toothless." There were laughs, titters, and whispers of "cheater," but they soon quieted as Stoick continued, "As such, they get the prize: the first mug of this year's pressed apple cider!"

There was a mixture of cheers and boos, but everyone seemed to be in good humor, so I assumed that it was another insane tradition to have objections. Stoick smiled as he handed Hiccup a large mug. I could tell they were having another one of those I'm-proud-of-you bonding moments, which I've always had difficulty understanding. Hiccup took a big gulp of the cider. A hush fell as everyone waited to hear his verdict on the quality. He wiped his mouth before saying, "It's the best I've ever tasted."

A cheer went up and everyone began congratulating the makers of the cider. Hiccup walked over to me.

"OK, bud, you're the one who earned most of this. Open up."

I obediently opened my mouth and Hiccup poured the rest of the contents of the mug onto my tongue. The first half a second was fine. Then the taste hit me. I managed to choke it down before sputtering. How could humans stand it? Maybe that's why they were weak: they drank awful stuff like that. There was a roar of laughter at my reaction.

"Well, that just means there's more for the rest of us!" someone called out. There were shouts of approval and everyone gathered around to get a mug of the disgusting stuff. I retreated back to my warm couch of coals and closed my eyes, still trying to get the taste out of my mouth. Once everyone had a mug, they began toasting everyone and everything. I did open my eyes when I heard Hiccup shout, "to Toothless!" To my satisfaction, no one refused, though the fact that I was in the building and watching probably helped a bit. After everyone had had at least four mugs of cider and finished toasting everything and everyone they could possibly think of, the party really began. Several people broke out fiddles, flutes, and drums (the majority of the musicians being teenagers or thereabouts) and the rest began dancing. I promptly tuned out the noise and settled in to take a nap. I was almost asleep when a sigh penetrated my sound block. I opened one eye and saw Hiccup standing close by, staring across the room at Astrid. Astrid was standing near the wall, apparently waiting for something, presumably a dance partner. Hiccup

seemed to be torn between asking her and finding a quiet corner where he wouldn't embarrass himself too much. I rolled my eyes as I got up. Dragon to the rescue. Again.

"Hey!" Hiccup cried as I began pushing him over to where Astrid was standing. With one final shove he was standing in front of her, looking awkward. He glanced at me and I gave him a "go ahead" motion. He sighed and turned to face Astrid again.

"Um, Astrid, uh, I was, um, wondering if, uh, you wanted to, um, dance, er, you know, with me?"

Astrid rolled her eyes as she smiled. "Of course. I've been waiting for you to ask."

"You-you were?"

"Oh, you guys." Astrid laughed as she grabbed his hands and led him to the dance floor. I allowed myself a satisfied smile as Hiccup made a valiant effort to not step on anyone's feet before heading back to the fire pit. In my absence some people had taken the opportunity to add more firewood. It was also covered in midget dragons, the only other dragons in the hall. I growled, but they seemed to be as reluctant to move from the heat as I had been. There was nothing for it. I jumped up and began shoving the little cretins aside, making enough room for me to lay down. The displaced dragons squawked in protest before climbing onto me. Normally I would shake them off, but I was feeling generous right then. Plus, they were warm. Several hours later, when Hiccup came to tell me that we were going home, he found me still buried under the midget dragons.

"Um, Toothless?"

I stuck my head out from under the pile.

"We're, um, leaving."

I stood and shook the small dragons off of me, triggering an avalanche of protests which quickly stopped when they found that I was leaving. As we headed for the door Hiccup stopped to say goodbye to Astrid. She pointed to a plant nailed to a rafter. Hiccup blinked a couple of times.

"Oh, um, mistletoe..."

Without further adieu Astrid grabbed him and kissed him. I cocked my head in puzzlement. What did a plant have to do with anything? Probably another pointless custom. I looked at the plant, then back at the humans. Astrid smiled.

"You can have one too."

She gave me a quick peck on my nose before leaving. I looked at Hiccup.

"No thanks, I'll pass."

Whatever. I headed in the direction of the door, with Hiccup following. Stoick met us there, and we headed out into the freezing cold. I immediately missed the fire pit in the hall and was tempted

to go back and crawl under those annoying midget dragons. Wistfully thinking about it, I followed my humans home. The inside of the house was almost as cold as the outside, the fire having been banked before we left. I followed Hiccup into his room, waited until he was under the covers, and curled around his bed, as I usually did.

"Goodnight, bud, tomorrow's Yule Day."

Why that made it different from every other day I wasn't sure, but if it made Hiccup happy, then I guess I could live with it. Hiccup went to sleep, but was soon tossing and turning and muttering incoherently. I knew he was having a nightmare, probably about falling into a blazing inferno. He'd had a lot of that kind of nightmare since our battle with the Green Death. I put my head close to his and purred. Hiccup stopped thrashing and soon was in a deep sleep, untroubled by dreams. I kept up my purring for a while longer to make sure the nightmare wouldn't come back before going to sleep myself.

I was awakened the next morning by Hiccup, who was shaking my foreleg.

"C'mon, bud, let's see if we got anything."

A little disgruntled, I followed Hiccup out to the main room, where a fire was blazing merrily. I was already curled around it and wishing I could have been last night when I noticed that there were several brightly colored objects underneath the tree. Curiosity overcame my desire for comfort and I came over to where Hiccup was gently shaking one of the things, apparently trying to figure out what was inside. I looked at him curiously. Why didn't he just open it? He saw my puzzled look.

"We have to wait until dad comes down."

Whatever. I went back to the fire. After a while Hiccup came over and leaned against me, gazing at the tree and all its sparklies. Stoick took his dear sweet time coming down. When he finally did Hiccup jumped up, or as near as he could with his prosthetic.

"Can we open presents now?"

"Go ahead."

Hiccup eagerly tore into the package he had previously been shaking, revealing one of those ridiculous fur things that many of the humans were fond of wearing. After a few words of thanks and delight he handed Stoick a smallish but seemingly heavy package. Stoick opened it and pulled out a small ax. He hefted it, waved it around a bit, then with frightening speed threw it. The ax thudded into the wall. He smiled as he retrieved it.

"Excellent balance. Did you make it?"

"Yeah."

Oh, great, another one of those stupid bonding moments. I yawned. Stoick seemed to realize that I was there for probably the first time since he came down. Humans. I swear, if they were any less observant they wouldn't notice if their arm got chopped off. Stoick excused

himself for a moment and returned with something hidden behind his back.

"I, um, got this for you." he said, holding out a large fish. At least he had good taste in presents. I made him jump three feet in the air as I suddenly snapped up the fish. Stoick sat down, and I came up with a devious idea. Much as I had done with Hiccup a few months ago, I spit out the tail half in Stoick's lap. He looked even more disgusted than Hiccup had. This was going to be a whole lot of fun. I looked at him, then at the fish, then at him again. He looked at Hiccup, who was desperately trying to hide a smile, before making a face and taking a large bite. I swallowed, and Stoick made the exact same face as Hiccup had before making several attempts to swallow, finally succeeding. This was hilarious! I licked my lips, and Stoick grimaced before smiling. I gave him one of my toothless smiles before going back to the fire, silently laughing.

"What just happened?" Stoick sounded both disgusted and confused.

"Toothless was just making friends with you." Hiccup turned away and pretended to cough, hiding his laughter.

"Um, thanks." Stoick said to me. I did another one of my smiles before resting my head close to the fire. Hiccup cocked his head, as if he was trying to hear something.

"I think the singing is starting."

"Well, let's go." Stoick said as he got up. I curled up closer to the fire. I was not going outside.

"Toothless, if you go you can lay in the fire pit again." Hiccup said. I was out the door before he even had a chance to get up and left them both far behind and laughing.

That was my first Yule ever. Sure, the snow sucked and humans were still the most insane creatures I had ever met, but Yule was still a good time to be in Berk.

* * *

><p>A little long for a one-shot, but I wasn't sure where the best break-off point would be for a chapter ending...though I doubt many would care. Anyway, Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good flight! (Everyone who's flying, anyway...)<p>

P.S. As several people were kind enough to point out, Vikings didn't actually celebrate Christmas, as they weren't Christians, so I went back and corrected it. Of course, they also didn't have Christmas (or, as in this story, Yule) trees, which originated in Germany, but that part was too good to leave out. Thanks to MWA220 and Mimisbrunnr for correcting me! Happy Holidays!

End
file.